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# Watson's Art Journal.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DEC. 28, 1867.

PUBLICATION OFFICE, CLINTON HALL, ASTOR PLACE.

## CONCERT OF THE N. Y. PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.

The Second Concert of the twenty-sixth season of the N. Y. Philharmonic Society was given at the Academy of Music on Saturday evening, the 21st inst., before a brilliant audience.

The programme was as follows :

PART I. Symphony, in C, Schubert.

Concerto, for the piano, in F minor, Weber.—Miss Alide Topp.

PART II. Overture, "Othello," (1st time,) Ritter.

Fantasia, "Ruins of Athens," (with orchestral accompaniment,) Liszt.—Miss Alide Topp.

Overture, "Calm at Sea, and happy Voyage," Mendelssohn.

The orchestra consisted of one hundred performers, and a more splendid mass of sonority was never listened to by a New York audience.

Schubert's beautiful symphony, in C, we have fully discussed before. On this occasion it was more than ever interesting from the superb manner in which it was rendered. Its exquisite melodial points, its masterly treatment, and its refined and poetic instrumentation, all were brought-out in admirable relief by the master touches of light and shade, conceived by the Conductor, and carried out with wonderful exactitude by the orchestra. It was a performance of such rare excellence as to be remarkable even among our memorable Philharmonic concerts.

Mr. Ritter's overture, "Othello," is a clever and musicianly composition; well instrumented and tolerably sequential as to thought, but in purpose it is weak, and we do not find in it any flash of inspiration. It smells of labor and the midnight oil, but in spontaneity it is greatly wanting, and, as a piece of music painting, it but faintly illustrates its title. It occupied a place in the programme which could have been much better filled. Why is Sterndale Bennett studiously omitted from our Philharmonic programme now?

Mendelssohn's exquisite tone picture, "Calm at Sea, and happy Voyage," was beautifully interpreted by the orchestra; the tender and delicate flow of the instrumentation was deliciously given, and the poetic picture was faithfully reproduced, with all the fine coloring of the author. The whole orchestral performance was not only entirely unexceptionable, but was of the highest degree of excellence, and commanded

the admiration of the most critical audience in the country.

Miss Alide Topp was the soloist of the evening, and her performance fully justified the selection directors. Miss Topp ranks with our first pianists, in the main points of excellence, although she exhibits some deficiency in actual physical power—a want which must be attributed to her sex. She possesses a fluent and brilliant execution, which is articulate, however rapid, or whether the movement be legato, rubato, or con brio. Her touch is fine in every point, her phrasing is decided and intelligent, her finger is unfailing, touching no false notes, and her style is broad and in a high degree intellectual. In point of depth of sentiment we think that she lacks *abandon*, but in grace she lacks nothing, and she is by no means deficient in expression.

Although she played Weber's F minor concerto finely, in a mere executive point of view, and in that she was almost faultless, her great and deserved success was in Liszt's Fantasia, "The Ruins of Athens." In this she was perfectly at home. Its numerous difficulties she had entirely mastered; to its meaning she had the key, and she dashed through its wild fantastic passages, and revelled in its fiery imaginations with a kindred feeling and an unembarrassed power of execution which fully and vividly interpreted its every meaning. It was unquestionably a remarkable performance, and was altogether the best and most appreciative reading of Liszt that we have heard in this country. It was a pure Liszt inspiration, and would have fully satisfied the great master himself. Her performance was greeted with a perfect storm of applause, which compelled her to acknowledge the encore, and in reply to it she played an Hungarian Rhapsody by Liszt, which is replete with all the idiosyncracies of that composer, even more splendidly than the previous piece. It was a veritable triumph, and the enthusiastic applause which greeted her at the close was an honorable and deserved tribute to her fine accomplishments and her brilliant talent.

We cordially congratulate Miss Alide Topp upon her well-earned and unequivocal success before the highest musical tribunal in this country; it is a fortunate augury of her future career, for it places her in the front rank with the greatest pianists of the day.

We are pleased to record that the Second Philharmonic Concert was, in all respects, as admirable and as satisfactory as the first, and we congratulate Dr. Doremus, the directors, and Mr. Carl Bergmann upon the brilliant position which the Society has assumed under their guidance.

The selections for the Third Concert are Beethoven's Choral Symphony and Spohr's Overture "Jessonda." Mr. S. B. Mills will be the soloist.

## MISS JENNY BUSK'S CONCERT.

The farewell concert given by this young and accomplished artist took place at Irving Hall on Monday evening last. The beginning of Holiday Week is unfavorable to all amusements, but more especially to concerts. On Monday evening nearly every place of public entertainment was more than half empty, and Miss Busk must congratulate herself that under circumstances so unfavorable her concert was well attended.

Miss Jenny Busk's singing on this occasion fully justified our former expression of opinion. She has gained more confidence with the public, and has now a better control of her powers. Her voice is an exceedingly pure soprano of wide compass, and perfectly equal throughout. Its quality is both melodious and brilliant, and its culture has been careful and thorough; and in the pursuit of the graces of art, the development of sentiment and expression has been by no means neglected. In short, she has some of the best points of a true artist, and cannot fail to win popularity and maintain a high position as a vocalist. On this occasion her singing was thoroughly appreciated, the Queen of Night's song from Mozart's "Magic Flute" being her most brilliant effort, and she was greeted after each performance with hearty and continued applause. Miss Busk leaves New York with the regret of all who have heard her, but she carries with her a reputation fairly earned which will be a passport for her wherever she goes.

Mr. Leopold de Meyer assisted Miss Busk, and played with his usual brilliant facility, but he seemed to be all the time in danger of leaving the orchestra suddenly, as he brought his hat with him (and an extraordinary hat it is) to be ready for a start at a moment's notice. However, he didn't leave until he had finished his pieces. Mr. Hill, Mr. Kopta and Mr. Colby, who also assisted, acquitted themselves to the satisfaction of the audience.

Miss Jenny Busk will give several concerts in Baltimore and Washington during the month of January, 1868, when we understand she will be assisted by the celebrated violinist, Mr. J. B. Poznanski, and Mr. Charles Fradel.

## ART GOSSIP.

Every gallery of the city beams with sunshine, and the pictures smile from the walls for expected purchasers. Those who can go into Goupil's or Schaus' galleries without finding something that will please the most fastidious taste in art, we pity. Among the marked pictures at Schaus' are two by Edouard Hammon, and are drawn from the lives of Paul Veronese and Murillo. The first tells the story of the meeting of Veronese, Tintoretli

and Titian, at the house of the first in Venice, in 1570. The scene is a sunset falling through a fine open court, familiar in Venetian architecture; and the occasion is a *fête*, the servants just clearing away the remains of a feast, while the guests are dispersed in various groups as though they had fed well and bountifully. Veronese has his portfolio open and is submitting his designs to Tintoretto and Titian.

The other is Murillo receiving the Archbishop of Seville in his studio. He has just finished "The Immaculate Conception," and the Archbishop as he looks upon the picture uncovers his head in respect to the picture.

Goupil's gallery has many exquisite pictures from French artists, among which are Messonier's study of "A Soldier," Dubuffe's "Alms," Gerome's "Louis XIV. and Moliere," besides many fine pictures by Trozon, Toulmouche, Willaus, Cabanal and others. The picture of Louis XIV. and Moliere, illustrates the story of the grand monarch rebuking his popinjay court for their contempt of the great writer. The scene is the king's bedchamber, and the courtiers have just entered to find the author and the monarch cosy over a bit of breakfast. The picture needs no praise, when we say that it is in the artist's best style.

The first Annual Exhibition of the artists in Water Color, opened at the Academy on the morning of the 20th. Hart, Coleman, Fenn, Boughton, Lumley, McGrath, Bellows and many others are contributors. Next week we shall take up their works and faithfully examine them.

At Leeds gallery there has been a sale of the last remaining specimens of those charming little pictures which sprang with such facility from the pencil of the late Dr. Ruggles. The prices which these gems brought must have troubled lovers of good pictures to think that they had not been more appreciative of the artist during his life, and have gladdened the heart and pocket of his widow for whose benefit the sale was. Some of the pictures which during the life of the artist would not have brought more than \$10, sold as high as \$110 or \$120, and others elicited a warm competition, showing that at last the admirers of the artist appreciated him in a financial point of view. We shall never again see such gems of color, and we predict that a few years will treble their price.

#### GEORGE F. BRISTOW'S NEW ORATORIO.

Mr. Bristow's new oratorio, "Daniel," will be produced this evening by the Mendelssohn Union. The interest attached to this work by a native composer, should be wide felt, for it is an important event in the

history of a new country. We call the attention of our readers to it, and shall notice its performance at length in our next. Every musician should make a point of being present, for it is an occasion of deep interest to all who hope for the rapid onward progress of art.

#### MUSIC ON CHRISTMAS-DAY.

The music at many churches on Christmas-Day was especially good. At St. John's the choir performed admirably under Dr. Pech's excellent management, and Porter's service in D and the Anthem from the Messiah received full justice from them. At the South Dutch Church, in Fifth Avenue, corner of Twenty-first street, the high reputation for good musical performance was sustained in the execution by a double quartette—Mrs. Farnsworth, late Hattie Andem, Misses Harrison, Meyer and Lissenden, Messrs. W. J. Hill, Eager, Beckett, and Booth, of Christmas Hymn—Adeste Fideles—Anthem by Hopkins, "Let us go, even unto Bethlehem," 110th Hymn, and Anthem from Haydn's 3d Mass, "Sing unto God." The latter made a profound impression, both as a composition and the fine style in which it was given. The congregation at this Church fully appreciate the excellence of their choir and music as prepared for them by Mr. Connolly, organist, and Mr. Wardwell, the musical director. They afford cheerfully the means to acquire such excellence.

At St. Bridget's Church, Mr. James Caulfield, organist and conductor, brought out for the first time in this country Gounod's celebrated Mass. The soloists were Mme. Reveille, soprano; Miss Cox, contralto; Mr. Dehnhoff, tenor; and Mr. Haden, basso. This composition relies much for effect upon orchestral and choral aids, but with the force at Mr. Caulfield's disposal he accomplished very much and propitiated the public to Gounod's praise. The Mass is divided into *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus*, *Benedictus*, and *Agnus Dei*, the *Gloria* being the most striking and effective; the solo for soprano is written for choral accompaniment, in six parts, hummed only. There is a piece for seven voices, with obligato pedal, the soprano and tenor have solos in *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*, the bass in the *Gloria*.

At St. Stephen's Church the well-known Twelfth Mass of Mozart was given with large choral and orchestral accessories. Their effects were better than were possible to be obtained from the soloists, whose voices were sadly overlaid by instrumental force.

At St. Patrick's Cathedral, which is remarkably favorable to vocal performance, there was excellent music thrice on Christmas-Day. At 10½ o'clock Mandanici's fine Mass had thorough illustration by a very efficient choir, and the soloists, Mme.

Chome, Mrs. Grosz, Mrs. Werner, Mr. H. Schmitz, and Mr. Sohst. We have not heard four better voices or better executants in a choir than Mme. Chome, Mrs. Grosz, and Messrs. Schmitz and Sohst, and greatly as Mme. Chome has distinguished herself before in church music, we deemed her solo performance on that occasion a positive advance to pre-eminence. The offertory was Rossini's *O Salutaris*. At vespers there was much done to increase the acceptance with musicians of Mr. Gustave Schmitz, the organist and conductor, and his well-selected vocalists. The sole defect was in the miserable organ furnished until the new one is ready.

#### OLE BULL.

Ole Bull, the world-renowned violinist, left this city for Albany on Tuesday last. He will devote a week or two to the arrangement of his business, he being a large holder of real estate in the West, and will also visit a Norwegian settlement, in the welfare of which he is deeply interested. After which he will commence an extensive Concert tour through the West and South, extending probably as far as New Orleans. He will then visit New York and give some concerts on a grand scale.

He has engaged the well-known artiste Madame Varian Hoffman, who is immensely popular in the West, to accompany him, together with M. Pollak, the baritone, and Mr. Edward Hoffman as solo pianist and accompanist.

As soon as the fact of Mr. Ole Bull's arrival was made known, the Managers were all on the alert, and offers of engagement poured in upon him, but he determined to act for himself, entrusting his business to Mr. F. Widdows, and relying upon his universal popularity for success.

#### NEW BOOKS.

We have before us the last issue of the Dickens Diamond Edition, in the shape of "The Commercial Traveller," and other Christmas stories, from Messrs. Ticknor & Fields.

We have so often commended this charming issue of the works of Charles Dickens, that language seems useless. We can readily understand the pride the author must feel in viewing an edition of his works in this country more than competing with the best of them in his own land, and combining all the requisites of typography, illustration, neatness, artistical binding, and good paper. The present volume contains several stories not included in any other volume issued in this country, and it was collected and revised by Mr. Dickens himself, and is the only edition authorized by him. Add to this that it is essentially the cheapest in the world, and